



# The Parish of Wellow

## JESUS' BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION PARTY

4.30pm - Christmas Eve 2011

### **NARRATOR 1**

Just a minute, I thought we'd been invited to Jesus Birthday Party. This is just a school disco. (*Dancers please go and sit down*)

Well, may I give you a warm welcome this afternoon and wish you a very happy Christmas. Now we are going to hear, in words and carols the true story of the birth of Jesus Christ on the first Christmas Day, as told in the Bible. Where are the actors? Where are the readers? The actors are moving into positions and the readers are sitting with us now. Let us start by joining in the Celebration of Jesus' birth. I hope that our tableau and readings will lead us all to worship Jesus the King.

### **CAROL**

*Come and Join the celebration  
It's a very special day;  
Come and share our jubilation,  
There's a new King born today!*

See the shepherds  
Hurry down to Bethlehem;  
Gaze in wonder  
At the Son of God  
who lay before them.

Wise men journey,  
Led to worship by a star,  
Kneel in homage,  
Bringing precious gifts  
from lands afar, so  
'God is with us,'  
'round the world the message bring;  
He is with us,  
'Welcome!' all the bells on  
earth are pealing.

**NARRATOR 1** Our story begins in the Middle East, in the area we call Israel and the West Bank. It is a story of wisdom and learning; danger and bravery; worship and wonder.

**NARRATOR 2** – Long before Jesus was born God had promised to send the Jewish people the Messiah, the Saviour, listen to our first reading, there are some strange words, but listen carefully,

### **READER 1**

God spoke through the prophet Isaiah - The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the valley of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder:

### **READER 2**

and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace

**READER 3** - Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel – God with us.

## **CAROL**

1 Unto us a boy is born!  
King of all creation,  
came he to a world forlorn,  
the Lord of every nation,  
the Lord of every nation.

2 Cradled in a stall was he  
with sleepy cows and asses;  
but the very beasts could see  
that he all men surpasses,  
that he all men surpasses.

3 Herod then with fear was filled:  
A prince,' he said, 'in Jewry!'  
all the little boys he killed

at Beth-lem in his fury,  
at Beth-lem in his fury.

4 Now may Mary's son, who came  
so long ago to love us,  
lead us all with hearts aflame  
unto the joys above us,  
unto the joys above us.

5 Omega and Alpha he!  
let the organ thunder,  
while the choir with peals of glee  
doth rend the air asunder,  
doth rend the air asunder.

**NARRATOR 1** I thought we'd been invited to a birthday party, not a history lesson!

**NARRATOR 2** Hold on a bit, its patience you need! God had promised the Messiah to the Jews since the beginning of time and reminded his people by sending his messengers the prophets. Time moves on and many people have written accounts about the events of Jesus' birth.

### **READER 4**

It begins with a Jewish priest called Zechariah, who lived when Herod was king. He was married to Elizabeth, but they were sad as they had no children. One day when Zechariah was working in the Temple an angel appeared to him – naturally he was surprised and a bit frightened. The angel told him not to be afraid, and also that Elizabeth would have a son. Zechariah didn't really believe it. So the angel told him he would not be able to talk until after the baby was born. This happened.

**NARRATOR 1** about six months later, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, to Elizabeth's young cousin, Mary who was engaged to Joseph. The angel said to her "Greetings, you are highly favoured! The Lord is with you." Mary was surprised and worried. Then the angel Gabriel told her she would have a baby, son, she was to call him Jesus, he would be great, the Son of the Most High, the Lord God. Mary went to visit Elizabeth and they talked about the news and Mary was so happy that she sang a song of praise to God.

**NARRATOR 2** Mary went back home, then one day they heard that King Herod had said they should have a census, everyone had to go to their places of birth to be registered. Mary's baby was nearly due and she and her fiancé had to travel to Bethlehem. It was a long journey by donkey and Mary was very tired.

share all the secrets, worries and fears with and then live, with him a perfect life in heaven. What a wonderful thing! Don't forget how special it is to know that while we are busy enjoying Christmas, and that is why we came today to celebrate His Birth Day. Now we will pray.

### **PRAYER**

Lord God, as we celebrate Christmas this week,  
Make us like the shepherds keen to worship Jesus,  
Make us like the wise men, full of generosity,  
Make us determined to do good,  
And so may our celebrations bring joy to those around us,  
And bring joy to you. Amen.

### **NARRATOR 2** The Blessing

May the blessing of the Lord Jesus, King of the Jews,  
Saviour of the world,  
God Almighty from everlasting to everlasting,  
be with us and those whom we love,  
this Christmas and for ever more. Amen.

### **WISHING YOU A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS**

**DO NOT FORGET TO TAKE YOUR GOODY BAG ON YOUR WAY OUT!**

### **CAROL**

1 Little donkey, little donkey,  
on a dusty road  
Got to keep on plodding onwards  
with your precious load:  
Been a long time little donkey,  
through the winters night  
Don't give up now little donkey,  
Bethlehem's in sight

*Ring out those bells tonight  
Bethlehem, Bethlehem  
Follow that star tonight  
Bethlehem, Bethlehem  
Little donkey, little donkey,  
had a heavy day  
Little donkey carry Mary  
safely on her way  
Little donkey carry Mary  
safely on her way*

2 Little donkey, little donkey,  
journey's end is near.  
There are wise men, waiting for a  
sign to bring them here.  
Do not falter, little donkey,  
there's a star ahead;  
it will guide you, little donkey,  
to a cattle shed

*Ring out those bells tonight  
Bethlehem, Bethlehem  
Follow that star tonight  
Bethlehem, Bethlehem  
Little donkey, little donkey,  
had a heavy day  
Little donkey carry Mary  
safely on her way  
Little donkey carry Mary  
safely on her way*

**NARRATOR 1** well we all know what happened when they got there – there was nowhere to stay. An innkeeper eventually said they could stay in his stable and there Jesus was born. If we open the doors we will see Mary and Joseph, with the baby Jesus, not in a stable, in front of us now.

### **CAROL**

1 Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;  
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,  
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

**READER 5** And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

**READER 6** Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests." When the angels had left them

and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

**READER 7** So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

### Carol

1 While shepherds watched  
their flocks by night,  
all seated on the ground,  
the angel of the Lord came down,  
and glory shone around.

2 'To you in David's town this day  
is born of David's line  
a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;  
and this shall be the sign:

3 'The heavenly babe you there shall  
find  
to human view displayed,  
all meanly wrapped in swathing bands,  
and in a manger laid.'

4 'All glory be to God on high,  
and to the earth be peace;  
good will henceforth from  
heaven to men begin and never cease.

**NARRATOR 2** Meanwhile far away in the East there were wise men who studied the stars in the sky and they studied the writings of other wise men. Stories which told of the great King of the Jews, whom people thought would come to lead them to freedom, remember the Romans were governing the country at this time, and surely it must have been God who revealed to them that the time was right for the Messiah to be born. So their journey began. How did they know which way to go?

**NARRATOR 1** These wise men went to Jerusalem to see the king, Herod. They asked where the baby born to be King of the Jews could be found. They said they had seen a star rise in the east and followed it. Herod did not know and sent for his wise men in Jerusalem. His wise men told him that the prophets had said it would be in Bethlehem. Now Herod wanted to know all about this baby, born to be King, he was afraid that the newborn King would be king instead of him. So he sent them to Bethlehem.

### Carol

1 We three kings of Orient are,  
bearing gifts we travel afar,  
field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
following yonder star:

*O star of wonder, star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us to the perfect light.*

2 Born a King on Bethlehem plain,  
gold I bring to crown Him again:  
King for ever, ceasing never,  
over us all to reign. Chorus

3 Frankincense for Jesus have I,  
God on earth yet Priest on high;  
prayer and praising all men raising:  
worship is earth's reply. Chorus

4 Myrrh is mine: its bitter perfume  
tells of His death and Calvary's gloom;  
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
sealed in a stone-cold tomb. Chorus

5 Glorious now, behold him arise,  
King and God, and sacrifice!  
heaven sings alleluia,  
alleluia the earth replies:Chorus.

**READER 8** After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route

**NARRATOR 2** Those wise men had found the baby who was to be the king of the Jews. They knew they were in the presence of someone who had come from God and was quite unlike any other baby before or since. So they knelt down in front of him, gave him their gifts and worshipped him. It is right to worship Jesus, because He is the baby who grew to be the man who did everything it takes to allow God and humans to be friends. He was not only the Messiah, for whom the Jews waited, he was the Saviour of the world. So as we sit here thinking how wonderful it is that Jesus was sent from God to be born among us, let's sing a song of worship just for him.

### CAROL

O come, all you faithful,  
joyful and triumphant,  
O come you, O come you to Bethlehem;  
come and behold him,  
born the King of angels:  
*O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord!*

**NARRATOR 1** Those wise men did not go back to Herod and Jesus and his parents went and hid in Egypt until Herod had died and it was safe for them to return. Now Jesus grew up to be the most important person in the world. Why? Because those who follow Him as their friend and Lord will have someone to